# A NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

# A Program on International Transboundary Water Cooperation

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# **Attachments**:

Appendix 1: List of Eligible Countries for the Program Appendix 2: Sample – Letter of Institutional Support

# A Program on International Transboundary Water Cooperation

# Section A. Funding Opportunity Program Description

Announcement Type: New Cooperative Agreement

Funding Opportunity Title: A Program on International Transboundary Water Cooperation

Funding Opportunity Number: SFOP0005064

Catalog of Federal Domestic

Assistance Number: 19.017

Funding Amount: One award of up to \$496,000 U.S. Dollars

Key Dates: 1. Applications must be submitted by 11:59 P.M. EDT on

June 29th, 2018

2. Notification of project approval and grant signing

expected by September 30th, 2018

#### **Executive Summary:**

The U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs' (OES) Office of Environment, Conservation, and Water announces the Notice of Funding Opportunity ("NOFO") for a program on international cooperation on transboundary waters. The agreement will use U.S. Fiscal Year 2017 Economic Support Funds.

Eligibility is limited to U.S. non-profit/nongovernmental organizations subject to section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. tax code, foreign not-for-profit/nongovernmental organizations, educational institutions, and to public international organizations.

A Cooperative Agreement for up to \$496,000 U.S. Dollars (USD) in FY 2017 Economic Support Funds (ESF) will be awarded for a partnership mechanism that will build cooperation on shared waters that and leverage U.S. financial support, promote coordination between development partners on transboundary waters, and ensure the sustainability of the programs beyond the period of U.S. support. The program on international transboundary water cooperation will improve cooperation over shared waters in regions where water is, or may become, a source of conflict. The program's goal is to build political will and advance cooperative processes on shared waters where the lack of political commitment/engagement is an impediment to cooperative action. Meeting this goal will increase shared prosperity and regional security. The initial period of performance will be for three years (36 months). Funding authority rests in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended.

**Contact Person**: Ms. Jenna Shinen

Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs

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Please read carefully the entire NOFO if you plan to submit an application; there are steps that you should take immediately in order to make your submissions by the deadline.

# A1. Background

More than 260 river basins and 600 aquifers are shared between two or more countries. In many of these basins or aquifers, no formal agreement or institutional relationship exists between the parties to govern use of these shared water resources. As these resources degrade or become scarce, competition is likely to increase, raising tensions and increasing the likelihood of conflict. These can be particularly challenging problems to solve, as there are often legitimate competing interests. Countries frequently view water as a strategic asset, and a national security priority. Water disputes are often embedded within a broader context of social, economic, and political challenges or animosities, and the data on disputed water systems are frequently sparse or not publicly available. Many of these same challenges also exist at the local level as competition for water increases between different communities or water users, such as farmers and pastoralists. At the same time, water issues can be an important means of bringing communities and countries together, strengthening regional integration, and providing a stabilizing influence in regions of conflict.

The Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES) at the U.S. Department of State is a lead implementing partner of the U.S. Global Water Strategy (GWS), which seeks to strengthen water security (<a href="http://www.state.gov/e/oes/rls/rpts/globalwaterstrategy/index.htm">http://www.state.gov/e/oes/rls/rpts/globalwaterstrategy/index.htm</a>). This program will address Strategic Object #3 of the GWS: To reduce conflict by promoting cooperation on shared waters. The program's goal is to build political will and advance cooperative processes (e.g., through the establishment or promotion of institutional mechanisms that support co-management of shared water resources) where a current lack of political commitment or engagement is an impediment to cooperative action on shared waters. Meeting this goal will increase shared prosperity and regional security.

#### **Background for Applicants**

Applications should demonstrate knowledge in and the relevance of the program components critical to OES's goal of enhancing shared prosperity and regional stability through enhanced transboundary cooperation. Ideal NOFO applicants will demonstrate an expert understanding of, and capability in, process facilitation, transboundary water cooperation, environmental governance, conflict mitigation, mediation, decision sciences, climate resilience, political economy analysis, diplomacy, international development, and stakeholder engagement, particularly among development partners at the national and local levels. Applicants that have significant experience working in these areas will be scored more favorably. The U.S. Department of State will work closely with the Recipient to, when needed, facilitate integration of the program into the appropriate bilateral and regional fora. This program originates out of the Department's Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES), which will be the main point of contact for managing this program.

Eligibility for this NOFO is spelled out in Section C.

One cooperative agreement will be awarded for the implementation of this project, pending availability of funds. Up to \$496,000 in FY17 Economic Support Funds is available for this project. The initial period of performance will be for at least 36 months. Funding authority rests in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. All award decisions are contingent upon the availability of funding. Additional funding may be available to continue or expand selected activities funded in this cycle. Eligible competitive proposals not funded with FY17 funding may be considered for future support if additional funds are made available. For eligible countries, see Appendix 1.

The U.S. government may make award(s) on the basis of initial applications received, without discussions or negotiations. Therefore, each initial application should contain the applicant's best terms from a cost and technical standpoint. The U.S. government reserves the right (though it is not under obligation to do so), however, to enter into discussions with one or more applicants in order to obtain clarifications, additional detail, or to suggest refinements in the project description, budget, or other aspects of an application.

# A2. Program Goals

The program's goal is to build cooperative relationships among stakeholders (including governments, regional organizations, media, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs)) to create, enable, or reinforce cooperation and/or collaboration over shared waters, particularly in areas where political impediments limit cooperation. Such cooperation may occur through existing institutions, platforms, or organizations or through creating new formal or informal platforms for engagement. Meeting this goal should increase shared prosperity and regional security.

A primary objective is to establish, enhance, or lay the groundwork for formal or informal intergovernmental dialogue, institutional arrangements, and/or technical processes for transboundary water management decision-making that are endorsed by key stakeholders and/or financially supported by governments. *This objective may include but is not limited to:* 

- improved cooperative governance structures (i.e. river basin organizations or regional governmental cooperation) with sustained interaction between public governing bodies and other stakeholders that are inclusive, transparent, and equitable and/or
- interactive processes emphasizing bargaining, conflict resolution, and compromise that result in joint problem-solving, and which sustainably distribute costs and benefits related to basin management and development.

A secondary objective is improved coordination of diplomatic and development efforts around international cooperation on transboundary waters. *This objective may include but is not limited to:* 

- mobilizing regional development partner (i.e. donors or multilateral institutions) capacities, interests, and objectives towards coordinated, unified, and effective long-term support for transboundary water cooperation and/or
- reinforcing the benefits of cooperation through collaborative capacity-building activities, shared development projects, and/or mutually-beneficial investments that deliver tangible benefits.

# A3. Expected Results

The project should monitor and report on performance indicators (outputs and outcomes) that are specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, and time-bound. The project should also establish, where possible, performance baseline data and performance targets for each expected result and include details on what sources of data will be used to document performance, how the outputs and outcomes will be measured, frequency of measurement, and units of measure. **Applicants are welcome to suggest additional performance outputs and outcomes to the ones listed below based on the proposal's plan for achieving goals.** 

The outcomes are the focal point of this exercise in that they should be closely aligned and focused on meeting the objectives. Other outputs or metrics should be created to align with these outcomes. The outputs listed on this award are for tracking purposes and do not represent targets or goals. For example, while the number of institutions strengthened in each activity needs to be counted, the goal is not to engage lightly with a large number of institutions but rather to meaningfully engage with the institutions that are best aligned to help achieve the desired results of the program.

#### Outcomes or Results:

- 1. Evidence that countries are working together towards shared water cooperation (e.g., agreements, public statements, commitments, political endorsements, financial support, or institutionalizing or adding depth to regular meetings that increase cooperation).
- 2. Evidence that donors/investors are strategically collaborating to enhance transboundary water cooperation (e.g., joint dialogue, aligned planning, coordinated programming and/or diplomatic engagement).

# Performance Outputs:

- Number of institutions strengthened through each activity
- Number and role of participants from shared-water countries in activities
- Total number of participants in activities (number of people educated on tools, approaches, and/or methods for water security, Integrated Water Resource management, and/or water resource protection)
- Anecdotal narratives and indicators of progress/success
- Number of other donors who provide funding or in-kind contributions to program activities

#### Key program principles:

- **Country ownership.** The program should be responsive to the needs expressed by the representative countries.
- Local knowledge. The program should work to make scientific and technical knowledge understandable and consumable to stakeholders at all levels of society and integrate local wisdom into activities and planning including identifying partners at the local level.
- Identifying and sharing best practices and lessons learned. The program should support experience sharing between countries in the region, and between the targeted eligible countries as noted in Appendix I and the broader international community.
- Cost-sharing and project sustainability. Projects should leverage additional institutional or outside resources to expand the impact of the program, contribute to sustainability of the program, and improve diplomatic engagement in the region. Emphasis will be placed on the long-term sustainability and expansion potential of activities implemented through this program.

- **Program Expansion.** In the event of a successful project or intervention, OES will consider the option of expanding the project to other areas or countries in the region, subject to available funding. Applicants may include in their proposal a brief section outlining how additional funds could potentially be used to expand work into further activities or additional countries. Applicants may elaborate on how their proposal will leverage this program's funding through international organizations or other partnerships.
- **Gender considerations.** Gender will be part of program planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- **Utilize Existing Resources and Expertise**: When possible, the applicant is encouraged to utilize existing initiatives and programs to further the goals of the project. For example, stakeholder meetings may be held on the sidelines of existing sector meetings or conferences.

The State Department takes into consideration the quality of data reported by grant recipients as part of the award activities, therefore applicants should be aware that recipients will be subject to data quality assessments.

#### A4. Main Activities

In the past, such programs have benefitted from a close collaboration between OES and the selected recipient. This close collaboration might include weekly check-in calls, approving all program activities before they begin, engaging diplomatically, or brainstorming about potential outcomes outlined above (A3. Expected Results).

The program should meet its objectives through 2-3 regional workshops, trainings, dialogues per year, as appropriate per target basin(s), designed and managed through regular communication with OES. It is expected that eligible applicants will be able to demonstrate and describe their ability to form sustainable partnerships and the capacity and flexibility to engage in shared water issues by:

- 1. Coordinating and forming informal intergovernmental dialogues thought different platforms.
- Fostering meetings, roundtables with representatives involved in river basin organizations or regional units to foster sustained dialogues between public governing bodies and other stakeholders.
- 3. Conflict resolution/mediation workshops.

#### **A5. Performance Indicators**

In the Proposal Narrative of the application, please outline a Program Strategy, i.e. an illustrative course of action that advances the goal and objectives of this program. This document should include sufficient detail to explain how proposed activities, outputs, and outcomes will serve to advance cooperation on shared waters and meet the program's goals and objectives. The applicant's illustrative course of action will demonstrate the intended approach, methodology, and processes for achieving each of the program objectives.

The project should monitor and report on performance indicators that are specific, measurable, achievable, reasonable, and time-bound. Establish, where possible, performance baseline data and expected performance targets for each expected result, and include details on what sources of data will be

used to document performance, how the indicators will be measured, frequency of measurement, and units of measure. Where possible, indicators should also allow for gender disaggregation.

Applicants must select and report against at least one of the U.S. Department of State standard performance indicators listed below:

- EG. 10.2-3: Number of people with increased economic benefits derived from sustainable natural resource management and conservation as a result of USG assistance. (number of men/number of women)
- EG. 10.2-4: Number of people receiving USG-supported training in natural resources management and/or biodiversity conservation. (number of men/number of women)
- EG. 10.2-5: Number of laws, policies, or regulations that address biodiversity conservation and/or other environmental themes officially proposed, adopted, or implemented as a result of USG assistance
- HL.8.3-1: Number of people educated on tools, approaches, and/or methods for water security, integrated water resource management, and/or water source protection as a result of USG assistance. (number of men/number of women)
- HL.8.3-2: Number of action plans implemented for water security, integrated water resource management, and/or water source protection as a result of USG assistance. (water security/integrated water resource management/water source protection)

In addition to the Department of State's standard indicator(s), OES encourages applicants to identify custom program-specific indicators for monitoring and reporting on program activities. Potential program-specific indicators could include, but are not limited to:

- Number of institutions strengthened due to U.S. government (USG) assistance
- Number of conflict/fragility early warning systems, conflict assessments, or response mechanisms supported by USG assistance
- Number of development partners engaged as a result of USG assistance

All applicable indicators and outcome metrics should be included in the proposal. Subsequent to the award, routine, periodic reporting of all outcomes is required.

The State Department takes into consideration the quality of data reported by grant recipients as part of the award activities, therefore applicants should be aware that recipients will be subject to data quality assessments.

#### A6. Substantial Involvement

Substantial involvement from OES is expected for this Cooperative Agreement. Substantial involvement may include: meeting facilitation with key in-country stakeholders; participant selection, approval of work-plans, implementation activities and troubleshooting as needed.

#### Section B. Federal Award Information

# **B1.** Available Funding

Overall grant-making authority for this project is contained in the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended. OES has funding available for a single award of up to \$496,000 USD for the Program on

International Cooperation on Transboundary Waters. The initial period of performance will be 36 months. Depending on the quality of performance and other factors, OES may consider additional supplemental funding to continue activities and extend the period of performance, if funds are available and if OES and the Recipient mutually agree.

#### **Summary of Award Information**

Type of Award	Cooperative Agreement
Fiscal Year Funds	FY 2017
Approximate Total Funding:	\$ 496,000 USD
Approximate Number of Awards:	1
Anticipated Award Date:	September 2018
Anticipated Project Completion Date:	March 2021

#### Timeline for Award Adjudication

Deadline for Applications	11:59 P.M. EDT on June 29, 2018
Notification of Project Approval/Disapproval and Cooperative Agreement Signing	September 30, 2018

# **B2.** Award Management

The successful applicant awarded under this NOFO will need to routinely collaborate with relevant U.S. government agencies, primarily the U.S. Department of State.

The Recipient must ensure that all funds are used in a manner consistent with U.S. government laws on the use of foreign assistance funds, including any applicable restrictions on funding.

# Section C. Eligibility Information

# C1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility is limited to U.S. non-profit/nongovernmental organizations subject to section 501 (c) (3) of the U.S. tax code, foreign non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and public international organizations.

Technically eligible submissions are those which: 1) arrive electronically to www.grants.gov or SAMS Domestic by the designated deadline; 2) have heeded all instructions contained in the Notice of Funding

Opportunity (NOFO), including length and completeness of submission; and 3) do not violate any of the guidelines stated in the solicitation and in this document.

# C2. Cost Sharing

Cost-sharing is not required for this application, but other donor, partner, or Recipient cost-sharing or in-kind contributions could contribute to the goal of sustainability for the program. A description of all key partners for this project and of the proposed working relationship with them should be included in the Proposal Narrative. Applicants should clearly distinguish between organizations with whom they intend to enter into a sub-grant or sub-contract relationship, and partners with whom they intend to collaborate but not transfer program funds. Partner in-kind contributions can be listed as part of the cost share.

# Section D. Application and Submission Information

# D1. Address to request Application Package

Please read carefully the entire announcement and follow the guidelines below before sending inquiries or submitting proposals.

Once the NOFO deadline has passed, OES staff may not discuss this competition with an applicant until the proposal review process has been completed.

# **D2.** Content and Form of Application Submission

Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this NOFO should submit them by email to Ms. Jenna Shinen (<a href="ShinenJL@state.gov">ShinenJL@state.gov</a>) and Mr. Andrew Judaprawira (<a href="JudaprawiraAJ@state.gov">JudaprawiraAJ@state.gov</a>). Please refer to the funding opportunity number. Any updates about this NOFO will also be posted on <a href="www.grants.gov">www.grants.gov</a> and SAMS Domestic (<a href="https://mygrants.service-now.com">https://mygrants.service-now.com</a>).

Applicants must include the following in the proposal submission. All submissions must be in English.

- 1. Table of Contents that lists application contents and attachments (if any);
- 2. Completed and signed SF-424, SF-424A and SF424B, as directed on www.grants.gov and SAMS Domestic. The certifications and assurances that your organization is agreeing to in signing the SF-424 are available at <a href="https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html">https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/sf-424-family.html</a>;
- 3. If your organization engages in lobbying activities, a Disclosure of Lobbying Activities (SF-LLL) form is required.
- 4. Letter(s) of Institutional Support to indicate that your organization's leadership is providing their support of the application. See sample letter in Appendix 2.

An important part of the application is the Proposal Narrative. The Proposal Narrative (not to exceed 12 pages, single-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman font in Microsoft Word, with at least one-inch margins),

should be organized using the following section headings: Executive Summary, Organizational Capacity and Past Performance, Partnership Strategy, Program Strategy, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, and Management Plan. (CVs, budget components and the SF-424s do not count as part of the 12 page limit). If activities are proposed in more than one geographic area or shared basin, additional Program Strategies can be appended to the Proposal Narrative. The point value shown for each section indicates its relative importance in the application review process. Please see Section E for more information. Evaluation values are based on six narrative components and two budget components.

#### Narrative Components (85 points total)

#### 1. Executive Summary (5 points)

This section should be a succinct one-page summary containing information that the applicant believes best represents its proposed program and includes:

- The name and contact information for the project's main point of contact
- A one-paragraph program description
- The project's purpose, targeted countries (countries of implementation are those countries or participants from countries that will received financial or technical support as a result of this project)
- Program length (dates/duration) and total funding requested (indicate any sub-grants proposed)
- The project's goals, primary objectives and expected results (highlighting any aspects of innovation, sustainability and impact of the project)
- Involvement or use of any NGO's or civil society organizations
- Expected results and sustainability

#### 2. Organizational Capacity and Past Performance (20 Points)

This section of the application provides information about the applicant organization. It provides evidence that the applicant has the ability to successfully carry out the program activities of the agreement.

- Provide a description of the applicant organization including its general purpose, goals, annual budget (including funding sources), and major past and current activities and projects undertaken.
- As an attachment (which does not count as part of the 12 pages), please provide at least one past performance reference which describes any contracts, grants, or cooperative agreements which the applicant organization has implemented involving similar or related programs over the past three years. Please provide the reference in an attachment and include the following information: name and address of the organization for which the work was performed; current telephone number and email address of responsible representative from the organization for which the work was performed; contract/grant name and number (if any), annual amount received for each of the last three years and beginning and end dates; brief description of the project/assistance activity and key project accomplishments/results achieved to date.

Organizational capacity and past performance will be judged based on the following criteria:

- Expertise and capacity in process facilitation
- Transboundary water cooperation,
- Environmental governance,
- Conflict mitigation and mediation,
- Decision sciences and climate resilience,
- Political economy analysis,
- International development, and stakeholder engagement, particularly among development

#### partners at the national and local levels

#### 3. Partnership Strategy (25 Points)

This section of the application describes how the Partnership will work to effectively and sustainably leverage and coordinate technical, financial, and diplomatic support from a broad range of government and non-government partners around the Program Goals in Section A2. Issues that could be addressed include:

- The overall structure and goals of the Partnership
- How the Partnership will be supported
- How relationships with donor partners, technical experts, and other partners will be managed and encouraged

#### 4. <u>Program Strategy</u> (20 Points)

This section will describe one or more proposed programs that will directly address the Program Goals in Section A2 within the context of the Partnership. If multiple Program Areas are being proposed for certain countries or geographic areas, you may append individual Program Strategies that will be not included in the 12 page limit. No supplemental Program Strategy should exceed two pages. For each country or geographic area, the Program Strategy should include:

- A clear and realistic implementation plan to significantly address the Program Goals in Section A2.
- An outline of the expected and achievable results for the project which could include suggestions in Section A3. It should also outline the relevant and appropriate Main Activities to accomplish the goals and expected results, which could include those found in Section A4. Explain the assumptions on which the success of the project depends, and the involvement of other stakeholders. The narrative should also describe how OES can be most useful in achieving the program's objectives.
- In table format, a brief one- to two-page work plan matrix (which does not count as part of the 12-page limit), with a timeline including target dates for activities throughout the life of the agreement, and which reflects the overall program approach and objectives. The timeline below is provided as an example. OES will help the implementer determine where and when to engage in activities, but the work plan should include the length of time certain activities will take to plan and execute.

Primary Activities, Deliverables, and/or Milestones	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Etc.
Project Monitoring Plan (may be requested within 90 days of the start of the activity (see Attachment A))	X					
XYZ Activity	X	X	X	X		
Activity 123			X	X	X	
Etc.						

Each Program Strategy will be judged based on the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the hydrological, political, and economic challenges that are commonly faced in international cooperation on transboundary waters.
- Clarity and specificity of the problem(s) being addressed and its potential impacts.
- Clarity and specificity of the proposed solution to be implemented and its potential impacts on transboundary water cooperation.
- Clearly articulated program pathway for achieving program goals and objectives through activities, outputs, and outcomes.
- Well-defined and attainable outputs and outcomes.
- Well-defined program assumptions and risks, including their likelihood.
- Explanation of how the program will be monitored in each country, and how project activities will be coordinated with OES to determine what changes, if any, need to be made to original plan, based on monitoring.
- Identification of which change agents in transboundary waters are critical to achieve program success, what those change agents can provide to support the program's goal and objectives (i.e. to help promote, co-fund, or provide in-kind support to the program), why they are critical, and how they will be engaged in the program.
- Identification of how the program would ensure that all appropriate parties would participate in activities, i.e. actions to be taken to ensure gender does not exclude appropriate parties from engaging with the program.
- Discussions of where additional diplomatic support from OES might be required or desired based on the Role of OES, Section A4.
- Explanation of any in-kind or cost-share contributions of applicant and/or other partners.

#### 5. Performance Monitoring and Evaluation (10 Points)

• Please provide an explanation of how hydrological, political, and economic realities will be monitored and how activities will be coordinated with OES to determine what changes if any need to be made to the original plan, based on monitoring. Discuss how progress towards the expected results will be measured, as outlined by the Performance Indicators in Section A5 in a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (no more than 2 pages, included in the 12 page narrative total). Identify which performance indicators will be measured, and how data on these indicators will be collected, analyzed, and used for program management. Present indicators linked to specific project objectives in table format, and include source of data and proposed frequency of collection. See the full list of Performance Indicators in Appendix 1. The following aspects of this section are required and will not count against the 12-page proposal narrative limit: a logic model (1-2 pages) and a Monitoring and Evaluation Performance Indicator Table (no more than 4 pages).

#### 6. Management Plan (5 Points)

 Describe the proposed management structure for this project and provide a project organizational chart in the attachments. Include in the narrative a description of the responsibilities of all principal organizations and staff involved, reporting relationships, authority and lines of communication within and between each of these organizations. • Include job descriptions and CVs of key staff (Project Director, etc.) as attachments (do not count as part of the 12-page limit), which demonstrate that the capabilities of the key staff are consistent with the requirements and needs of the project. The project should have a designated Project Director who will be expected to have lead responsibility for communicating with OES. Note the location where key staff will be based.

#### Proposal Narrative attachments that do not count towards the 12-page limit:

- Table of Contents
- Letter of institutional support from applicant organization
- Letters of Support from Partners (optional)
- Past Performance Reference
- Logic Model
- Monitoring and Evaluation Performance Indicator Table
- Project Organizational Chart and job descriptions
- CVs of key staff
- Supplemental Program Strategies
- Work plan matrices
- Other relevant figures and tables

#### **Budget Components** (15 points total)

- Refer to the Excel Budget Template for guidance on compiling a budget and associated budget narrative. A summary budget and a detailed budget following the Excel Budget Template are required for submission, as is a budget narrative. The detailed budget does not have to fit on one page.
- A PDF file copy of your organization's most recent program (A-133 /2 CFR 200) audit, if applicable. If not, please include a copy of your most recent independent audit, if available.

Before grants are awarded, OES reserves the right to reduce, revise, or increase proposal budgets in accordance with OES's program needs and availability of funds.

Please note: OES retains the right to ask for additional documents not included in this NOFO. Additionally, to ensure all applications receive a balanced evaluation, the NOFO Review Panel will review the first page of the requested section up to the page limit and no further. OES encourages organizations to use the given space effectively.

# D3. Unique entity identifier (DUNS) and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is exempted from those requirements under 2 CFR §25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR §25.110(d)) is required to: (i) be registered in SAM before submitting its application; (ii) provide a valid unique entity identifier in its application; and (iii) continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. The Federal awarding agency may not make a Federal award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Federal awarding agency is ready to make a Federal award, the Federal awarding agency

may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal award to another applicant.

In addition, if the organization plans to sub-contract or sub-grant any of the funds under an award, those sub-awardees must also have a unique entity identifier (DUNS) number. (Certain exceptions apply.)

#### **D4.** Submission Dates and Times

Applicants are urged to begin the application process well before the submission deadline. No exceptions will be made for organizations that have not completed the necessary steps. All applications must be submitted by 11:59pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on June 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

#### **D5.** Funding Restrictions

Applicants should note that construction is not an allowable activity and Federal awards will not allow reimbursement of pre-Federal award costs.

# **D6.** Other Submission Requirements – Proposal Format Requirements

The Department of State requires proposals be submitted electronically through Grants.gov (www.grants.gov) or SAMS Domestic (https://mygrants.service-now.com).

Organizations new to Grants.gov and SAMS Domestic: In order to register to use grants.gov and SAMS Domestic, an organization must complete a number of steps, which include those registration requirements listed in D3. Completing all of these steps can take up to 4 weeks, especially for an international organization. Additionally, SAMS Domestic requires multi-factor authentication.

# **Section E. Application Review Information**

#### E1. Criteria

Each application will be evaluated and scored on the five-part Proposal Components and the two-part Budget Components using a 100-point scale by a peer review committee of Department of State and other experts, as appropriate.

*Proposal Narrative*: The committee will score each of the five sections of the Proposal Narrative based on how completely the sections address the points described in the Proposal Narrative Guidance in Section 4D. The importance of each section is indicated by the maximum score as follows:

- Executive Summary 5 points
- Organizational Capacity and Past Performance 20 points
- Partnership Strategy 20 points
- Program Strategy 25 points
- Performance Monitoring and Evaluation 10points
- Management Plan 5 points

Budget: The committee will also review the budget components in order to assign up to 15 points for the overall program budget and cost-effectiveness. Proposals should keep estimated overhead and administrative costs as low as possible, and propose expenditures that are reasonable, allowable, and allocable to the proposed project activities, and which reflect the applicant's understanding of the allowable cost principles established by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) in 2 CFR 200. The amount of funding contributed by the applicant, sub-awardees, and other partners shows a commitment to the success of the project.

- Budget Appropriateness 10 points
- Cost-effectiveness 5 points

#### E2. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be reviewed by a technical review panel convened by the program office. The applications will be scored based on the strengths and weaknesses of the aforementioned criteria and response to the NOFO.

#### Section F. Federal Award Administration Information

#### F1. Federal Award Notices

The award shall be written, signed, awarded, and administered by the Grants Officer subsequent to the panel review and selection of proposals. The Grants Officer is the Government official delegated the authority by the U.S. Department of State Procurement Executive to write, award, and administer grants and cooperative agreements. The assistance award agreement is the authorizing document and it will be provided to the Recipient electronically through SAMS Domestic. Organizations whose applications will not be funded will also be notified in writing.

Issuance of this NOFO does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government, nor does it commit the Government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Further, the Government reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received.

# F2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

Prior to submitting an application, applicants should review all the terms and conditions and required certifications which will apply to this award to ensure that they will be able to comply. These include 2 CFR 200, 2 CFR 600, as well as the certifications and assurances and the Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions, all of which are available through the State Department's procurement website at: <a href="https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm">https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm</a>

Applicants should plan to coordinate with OES throughout the course of the agreement to ensure assistance is provided only to eligible participants.

#### **Banking Requirements**

If the award is approved, payments will be made through the online Payment Management System (PMS). Please consult with OES regarding how to proceed with PMS registration.

#### F3. Reporting

The Recipient, at a minimum, shall provide OES with the following reports (Please note that all data, supporting documentation, and contact information must be maintained for a minimum of three years, and provided to OES upon request):

#### **Financial Reports**

The Recipient is required to submit quarterly financial reports throughout the project period, using Form FFR SF-425 (the Federal Financial Report form) as well as forms suggested by the Grants Officer Representative. If payment is made through the Payment Management System, all financial reports must be submitted electronically through the Payment Management System. The grantee is also required to upload to SAMS Domestic a pdf version of all financial reports (Federal Financial report) they have submitted in the Payment Management System. Form FFR (SF-425) can be found on OMB's website here:

https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/forms/post-award-reporting-forms.html#sortby=1.

Financial reports are due on /before 30 days after the end of each quarter.

#### **Progress Reporting**

The awardee is required to upload all progress reports to the award file in SAMS Domestic. Progress reports must be submitted quarterly. Awardees must submit Page 1 of the Performance Progress Report (Form SF-PPR), signed, and completed as a cover page to progress reports. Progress reports should be compiled according to the objectives, outcomes, and outputs of the project as outlined in the statement of work below, consistent with the project proposal, monitoring and evaluation plan, and sustainability plans. Reports should also include an update on expenditures during the quarter. The awardee is expected to anticipate the reporting due dates by tracking implementation, outcome, and financial progress throughout the reporting period. OES may also provide a detailed reporting reminder before the due date for each quarterly report. At minimum, it is expected that quarterly progress reports will include:

- Significant activities in the period and how activities reflect progress toward achieving goals;
- Evaluation of progress on goals/objectives with quantitative and qualitative data, as appropriate;
- Any problems/challenges in implementing the project, and a corrective action plan;
- Evaluation of accomplishments with quantifiable information on goals and objectives to date, as available, including reporting on agreed-upon indicators;
- An update on expenditures during the reporting period;
- Supporting documentation or products related to project activities (such as surveys, travel, etc.);
- Performance indicator results and supporting documentation; and
- Project Spotlight highlighting a significant area of progress under the agreement as well as photos of implementation

Quarterly progress reports should also reflect the awardee's continued focus on measuring the project's impact on the overarching goals or problems the project set out to address. An assessment of the overall project impact, as appropriate, should be included in each quarterly project report.

#### **Final Report**

The final report will be due no later than 90 days after the end date of the award or termination of all project activities. The final report shall include the following elements: executive summary, successes, outcomes, best practices, how the project addresses gender issues and marginalized communities, how the project will be sustained, and a final financial report. Additional guidance may be provided prior to the award end date.

# Section G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact

Any prospective applicant who has questions concerning the contents of this NOFO should email them to Ms. Jenna Shinen (ShinenJL@state.gov).

Note that once the Request for Proposals deadline has passed, State Department staff in Washington DC and overseas at U.S. embassies/missions may not discuss this competition with applicants until the review process has been completed.

#### Section H. Other Information

#### H1. Conflict of Interest

In accordance with applicable Federal policy, applicants must disclose in writing any potential conflict of interest to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity.

# **H2.** Applicant Vetting

Applicants are advised that proposals will be evaluated against the potential risk that federal funds may inadvertently be passed to the wrong hands and that funds may benefit terrorists groups or their supporters. Applicants may be asked to submit information required by DS Form 4184, Risk Analysis Information (attached to this solicitation), about their organization and its principal personnel. Vetting information is also required for all sub-award performance on assistance awards identified by the State Department as presenting a risk of terrorist financing. When vetting information is requested by the Grants Officer, information may be submitted on the secure web portal at: <a href="https://ramportal.state.gov">https://ramportal.state.gov</a>, via Email to RAM@state.gov, or hardcopy to the Grants Officer

Questions about the form may be emailed to <u>RAM@state.gov</u>. Failure to submit information when requested, or failure to pass vetting may be grounds for rejecting your proposal.

#### **H3.** Marking Policy

Applicants are advised that recipients and sub-recipients of Federal assistance awards are subject to the State Department's Marking Policy. More information on this policy can be found on: https://www.state.gov/m/a/ope/index.htm

#### **H4. Evaluation Policy**

Applicants are advised that recipients and sub-recipients of Federal assistance awards are subject to the Department of State Evaluation Policy. More information on this policy can be found here: <a href="http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/evaluation/2015/236970.htm">http://www.state.gov/s/d/rm/rls/evaluation/2015/236970.htm</a>. Further, recipient organizations are encouraged to conduct their own and/or independent evaluations on their Department of State funded programs to assess performance and outcomes.

# **H5.** Monitoring Site Visits

A monitoring site visit, at least once during the lifetime of a grant, is required by Department of State grant policy. The site visit is conducted to gather additional information on the recipient's ability to properly implement the project, manage OES funds and share substantiating document for programmatic and financial reporting. Specifically, the site visit will involve the review of the programmatic progress (progress on activities, sub-recipient/consultant work, etc.) as well as administrative and financial management and controls.

# **APPENDIX 1 – List of Eligible Countries for the Program**

Below is a list of the countries that are anticipated to be directly funded by FY17 Economic Support Funds; some changes to this list may occur. Participation by other riparian countries in key river basins not listed here can be covered through cost-share or in-kind contributions.

AfghanistanAlbaniaAlgeriaAngolaArgentinaArmeniaAzerbaijanBangladeshBelarusBelizeBeninBhutanBosnia and HerzegovinaBotswanaBrazil

Bulgaria Burkina Faso Burma (Myanmar)

Burundi Cambodia Cameroon Central African Republic Chad China Comoros Congo, Dem. Rep. Congo, Rep. Costa Rica Côte d'Ivoire Djibouti Dominica Dominican Republic El Salvador Eritrea Ethiopia Gabon Gambia, The Georgia Ghana

Grenada Guinea Guinea Guinea-Bissau
Guyana Haiti Hungary
India Iraq Jordan
Kazakhstan Kenya Kiribati

Korea, Dem. Rep. Kosovo Kyrgyz Republic

Lao PDR Lebanon Lesotho Liberia Macedonia, FYR Malawi Mali Mauritius Mauritania Moldova Mongolia Montenegro Morocco Mozambique Namibia Nepal Nicaragua Niger Nigeria Pakistan Panama Paraguay Peru Romania Rwanda Senegal South Africa South Sudan Sudan (non-government only) **Tajikistan** Tanzania Thailand Tonga

Tunisia Turkey Turkmenistan Uganda Ukraine Uzbekistan Vietnam West Bank/Gaza Zambia

# APPENDIX 2 – SAMPLE LETTER OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT

Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs (OES)

U.S. Department of State

2201 C Street, NW

Washington, D.C. 20520

[applicant Institution Letterhead]

Date:

[name of higher executive supportive of the proposal submission] Street Address State, and zip code

Attention: Maria Urbina

Bureau of Oceans and International Environmental and Scientific Affairs

U.S. Department of State

#### RE: Letter of support for Request for Applications # xxx

The [name of the applicant institution] is happy to endorse the proposal's entitled "XXXXXXX" in response to the NOFO# entitled XXXXXXXX. Our organization has been working in this area for the last X years and have developed extensive expertise in selected countries/region. (if you have established a long-standing contacts, describe those and briefly explain why you are interested in committing your organizational resources such as staffing and in-kind contributions in support of the NOFO goals.).

If your program intends to engage in collaborative efforts through sub-awards, please explain the rationale and your institution's objective for sub-awarding funds to local organizations. If you know the local institutions, please indicate, if relevant, that you have worked with relevant staff and explain the areas of collaborative work if relevant.

Sincerely,

[Sr. officer of the institution] Signature of President or Executive Office

FOR INTERNAL USE ONLY AT Department of State	
Reviewed by:	
Date:	
Comments:	